

Danville killing stuns, frightens neighborhood

FILE SEP 24 1985

By Frank Wootten
The Tribune

DANVILLE — In a town where murder is usually a far-away news report, the slaying of a 57-year-old woman whose nude body was found on her living room floor has shocked and frightened neighbors in her large apartment building.

"Everybody here is squeamish," said Valdis Wilson, the manager of the 46-unit building on Diablo Road. "Nobody is over it. It's scary."

Tight-lipped sheriff's detectives are revealing only the barest of details of the murder of Virginia Vincent — the first this year in a city that has had but one murder each year in the three years since its incorporation.

An autopsy showed that Vin-

See KILLING, Page A-12

Continued from Page A-11

cent, a saleswoman at a real estate office across the street from her apartment, died of a neck injury. But Capt. Russdell Pitkin, head of the sheriff's investigations division, would not elaborate, saying he couldn't speculate on the cause.

Neither would he say whether laboratory tests indicated the victim had been sexually assaulted. He added that he could not comment on the condition of the victim or the scene.

"All I can say is we have no motive," he said. "We have many leads and it will take quite awhile to follow them all up."

Vincent's body was found by Vern Wickman, who lives in the same apartment building and is the father-in-law of Vincent's daughter, Marianna Wickman of Concord.

The daughter notified Wickman when a man who came to

pick up Vincent for a dinner date got no response to his knock on the door.

Danville police, who later called in the sheriff's office to conduct the investigation, found Vincent on her back, her hands tied behind her. A thin white belt was on her neck and her stockings were on the floor beside her.

Two open bottles of beer, an open bottle of liquor and a partially-filled glass were on the floor. The television was on.

Marianna Wickman told officers her mother did not drink beer and was a meticulous housekeeper who never would have put the bottles on the floor.

Wilson, the apartment manager, said she saw Vincent drive in for lunch at 12:20 p.m. Friday.

"She was in and out many times during the day and usually came about 12:30 for lunch," Wilson said. "I had to leave Friday afternoon so I did not see her leave."

No suspect yet in slaying of Danville woman

FRI SEP 27 1985

By Roland De Wolk
The Tribune

DANVILLE — One week after the puzzling murder of a quiet woman who lived alone in her apartment here, residents of this calm bedroom community say it is still a safe place to live.

"I don't think there's any real worry," said one neighbor who asked not to be named. "There's a lot more people getting killed every day in other places."

Last Friday, Virginia Olive Vincent was found dead on the floor of her small apartment on a busy street leading to the freeway.

Police said she had been garrotted and was found bound and naked. They will not say if she was sexually molested.

Lt. Telford Terry of the Contra Costa Sheriff's Department, in charge of a three-man team investigating the murder, said he has no suspects in the case as he waits for fingerprints and other evidence to be processed by the laboratory.

Police in Danville said earlier this week that the murder is the first in the community in 1985.

See SLAYING, Page B-3

an electrical engineer noting that a beginning engineer can earn \$35,000. "We're throwing away half our potential talent" if women are

cat in this exciting sequence.

Continued from Page B-1

Only one murder has been reported in the city each year for the last three years.

As the victim's relatives cleaned Vincent's apartment yesterday and moved her car from the parking lot, residents in the apartment complex said they have resumed their routine lives.

"The police told us that the murderer was someone she probably knew," said neighbor Allison Coker. "They said her door had been opened by a friend or she had done it herself."

But questions remain.

The victim's relatives, who would not discuss the case yesterday, reportedly told the police that Vincent did not drink.

But there were two open bottles of beer at the scene, as well as an open bottle of another liquor and a half-filled glass.

Vincent's family also reportedly said it was uncharacteristic of the fastidiously neat woman to put the bottles on the floor, where they were found.

Neighbors said yesterday that a middle-aged man driving a late model, beige Lincoln Continental used to pick up Vincent every Friday around 5 p.m. and take her to dinner.

The body was found at 5:30 p.m. on a Friday.

Lt. Terry said Vincent's friend is not a suspect, but added that "no one has yet been cleared."

Most of the neighbors contacted knew little about the victim, characterizing her as a "loner."